

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE VILLAGE OF FRENCH SETTLEMENT, November 13, 2019**

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Village of French Settlement met at 16015 Hwy. 16, French Settlement, Louisiana on the 13th day of November, 2019 at 6 p.m. in regular session convened. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Toni Guitrau with the following members present:

Alderman Teresa Miller, Alderman Danette Carrier, Alderman Rhonda Lobell

Absent: None

Also present: Chief Mosby

A prayer was offered and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Public Comments on Agenda Items: None

Guest Speaker(s): DOTD Representatives – Amite River Bridge Construction Update: DOTD representatives gave an update on the proposed French Settlement Amite River Bridge replacement. Construction may begin early 2020 with the new bridge being constructed approximately 50' west of the existing bridge. The project could take approximately 2 years and 7 months to completion. The existing bridge will remain in place until the new bridge is completed. For the time being, the bridge plans will be on display at the French Settlement Municipal Building viewable to the public from Tuesday-Thursday.

Public Hearing: Proposed Budget of 2020. The title of Ordinance No. 2 of 2019 was read by Alderman Carrier. The Mayor opened the floor to public comments. There being no public comments, the Mayor adjourned the Public Hearing and called for a discussion among the Board on said Ordinance. In brief, Alderman Miller believed the proposed budget could be more bare-bone, conservative and less inflated, than presented. Mayor Guitrau explained that the income derived from fines was based on a 3-year average, and that the town must pay a new police chief's retirement contributions, along with expenses of a new police officer. However, she agreed that the \$5000 to pay for a part-time person to work one day per week could be considered later, if needed. The town hall is now open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays. Alderman Miller said if there was additional money in the budget, it should go to the police officer's pay but, she didn't agree with the money allotted in the line item for overtime for officers. After reviewing and discussing many of the line items, Alderman Miller said she would not vote for the budget, as presented. ~~She preferred it to be less than \$300,000, as in the past.~~ Alderman Lobell agreed with Alderman Miller. The proposed ordinance/budget failed due to the lack of a motion. Mayor Guitrau said that she would make changes to the proposed budget and would be in contact with the Board shortly to schedule a Special Meeting so that it could be re-introduced to set a public hearing for the regular meeting to be held on December 11, 2019.

Reading of Minutes

The motion to adopt the minutes for the month of October 2019, as presented, was made by Alderman Miller and seconded by Alderman Lobell. A yeas and a nay vote was called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Carrier, Lobell

Nays: None

Absent: None

Statement of Finances

The motion to adopt the State of Finances for the month of October 2019, as presented, was made by Alderman Carrier and seconded by Alderman Miller. A yeas and a nay vote was called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Carrier, Lobell

Nays: None

Absent: None

Reading of Communications: None

Police Department Report:

- For the month of October 2019: A total of 106 Incident Types some of which were as follows: 29 public or agency assist/welfare checks, 2 improper vehicle ops/intoxicated driver, 2 thefts/unauthorized use, 4 disturbances, 4 crashes/accidents, 7 suspicious incidences, 37 traffic stops and others. Captain Rhoads spoke in regard to the accidents and the theft of a trailer. The Mayor and Board had no questions.

Old Business

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE VILLAGE OF FRENCH SETTLEMENT, November 13, 2019**

Grounds Report: Mayor Guitrau said that during preparation for the Creole Festival, it was discovered that a rodent had ate into the pavilion wall and damaged several electrical lines by the breaker box. This was repaired but it has damaged the 2-year old hot-water heater. She is having the hot water heater checked.

Road Report: Mayor Guitrau attended a meeting a few days ago at the LP Planning Department in reference to the Mecca Road Extension being blacktopped. It is being reviewed by an engineering firm and has to go before the LP Council. If all goes well, it may be blacktopped in March 2020.

Grants: LGAP Grant 2019-2020: Mayor Guitrau is waiting to hear from the governor's office as to whether the village will receive any funds for this grant so that they can be combined with the \$6530 grant award from last year's grant. She wrote and submitted the grant for \$25,000. The whole of Livingston Parish, including the municipalities, are eligible for this grant if they apply. She believes after the first of January 2020, she will hear from them. This will be a "expend then reimburse" type of grant.

New Business

- **Propose Ordinance #3 of 2019 – Amendment #2, Budget of 2019.** This was introduced by Alderman Carrier. A public hearing will be held on December 11, 2019 at 6 pm at the regular meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.
- **Engagement Letter for 2019 Review.** Alderman Carrier made a motion to approve the Engagement Letter, as presented, with Diez, Dupuy, and Ruiz, LLC for \$3000.00. This was seconded by Alderman Miller. A yeas and a nay vote was called for and resulted as follows:
 - Yeas: Miller, Carrier, Lobell
 - Nays: None
 - Absent: None

Pavilion Rental Space. Upon review and discussion of expenses in relation to maintaining and renting the pavilion, a motion was made by Alderman Carrier, seconded by Alderman Miller to increase the fee from \$150 to \$200 per day. This is a \$50 increase. A yeas and a nay vote was called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Carrier, Lobell
Nays: None
Absent: None

Indoor Rental Space as small Community Center: The Mayor and Alderman discussed the "rental agreement" for renting indoor space of the municipal building (725 square foot room plus access to 2 restrooms and a kitchen). This area used to be rented as a Livingston Parish Library for many years. This agreement was prepared by the mayor and reviewed by the town attorney. Aldermen Lobell and Carrier recommended removing allowance of any alcohol. The aldermen set the one-day fee at \$300 with a \$50 refundable deposit. Mayor Guitrau reminded them that eight long tables and 2 round tables would need to be ordered, and that one or two times of renting it should cover the cost. The Board agreed with the purchase of the tables. The mayor said that the meeting room chairs could be used for a while to save money until it pays for itself. The diez area, including the black leather chairs would be roped off and not be allowed to use. This will be used as a small community center for a range of things such as bridal and baby-showers, birthday parties, small wedding and receptions, meetings, etc. A motion was made by Alderman Carrier, second by Alderman Lobell to accept the rental agreement, as amended. A yeas and a nay vote was called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Carrier, Lobell
Nays: None
Absent: None

Local Events: The Christmas Parade will be on Saturday, December 21, 2019 at noon.

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Carrier and seconded by Alderman Miller. A yeas and a nay vote was called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Carrier, Lobell
Nays: None
Absent: None

/S/Toni Guitrau, Mayor

/S/Pam Melancon, Municipal Clerk